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ABSTRACT

Suitable for introductory courses on indigenous peoples, this book analyzes the effects of industrial capitalism and modernity on indigenous people and their economies. Specifically, the book traces world history and synthesizes common themes regarding the detrimental effects of European expansionism on indigenous populations. Currently, there are approximately 263,891,000 indigenous people distributed over 6 continents and in more than 85 countries, and representing about 4 percent of the world's population. By far the largest representation of indigenous peoples live in Asia. However, there are only a few places where indigenous people find themselves to be a majority in their traditional homeland. The sum of 500 years of European expansionism resulted in the movement of 100 million people onto lands that were once used primarily by indigenous peoples. Indigenous societies that were invaded by Europeans soon found that the economic and philosophical underpinnings that had served their ancestors were irrelevant in the face of overwhelming changes introduced into their traditional territories. The first chapter of the book discusses the ramifications of past threats to indigenous populations including disease, warfare, loss of land, and marginalization. The second and third chapters discuss past and present threats to indigenous populations including large-scale migration of nonindigenous people onto indigenous lands, resource extraction and exploitation, military domination, and the continuous assault by the dominant culture on indigenous values and beliefs. The last chapter discusses the future of indigenous societies, including decisions indigenous people have to make between industrial and indigenous cultures. The book concludes that indigenous societies are re-establishing themselves by securing their land bases, initiating efforts at self-determination, and establishing a culturally relevant economy. Contains 87 references, maps, and an index. (LP)

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